

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-2575

FY 2015 APPLICATION PACKAGE FOR NEW GRANTS
UNDER

**THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON
DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND
REHABILITATION RESEARCH**

REHABILITATION ENGINEERING
RESEARCH CENTERS (RERC)

Information and Communication
Technologies Access

CFDA NUMBER: 84.133E-3

FORM APPROVED
OMB No. 1820-0027, EXP. DATE 05/31/2016 SF FORM 424, 08/31/2016

**DATED MATERIAL - OPEN IMMEDIATELY
CLOSING DATE: April 20, 2015**

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SECTION A

DEAR APPLICANT LETTER

Dear Applicant:

The Administrator of the Administration for Community Living invites applications for a new award in fiscal year (FY) 2015 under the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERC) program, for Information and Communication Technologies Access (CFDA Number - 84.133E-3).

NIDILRR is seeking applications that address all elements of the priority, and that propose appropriate, high-quality research and development methodologies. It is critical that proposals describe expected public benefits, especially benefits for individuals with disabilities, and propose projects that are designed to demonstrate outcomes that are consistent with the proposed goals.

The start date for new awards for the (FY) 2015 programs will be no later than September 30, 2015.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

This application package contains information and the required forms for potential applicants to apply and be considered for a FY 2015 grant award under this competition, including the published Federal Register notice dated February 17, 2015. The background statement from the Notice of Proposed Priorities is in Section D.

The closing date (application deadline) is April 20, 2015.

Potential applicants are advised to read the materials in this application package carefully. Please pay particular attention to the information contained in the Notice Inviting Applications on the eligible applicants, and the dollar amount available for this competition. Applicants should also pay close attention to Section F – the Selection Criteria, Section G – Protection of Human Subjects, and Section H – Application Format and Instructions. Applications must be responsive to the absolute priority in Section C and the statutory, regulatory, and general requirements for the RERC program in Section E. The application narrative should be written in the order of the selection criteria in Section F. The selection criteria will be used by the reviewers to evaluate the application.

Include a one-page abstract. The abstract is a critical component of the proposal, and it should describe the purpose, target population to be served during the project period, planned goals and objectives, proposed methodological approach, and anticipated project outcomes.

AWARD AMOUNTS AND INDIRECT COST RATE

We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding the amount of \$925,000 for a single budget period of 12 months for the RERC on Information and Communication Technologies Access (CFDA Number - 84.133E-3). The indirect cost rate is your institution's federally negotiated rate.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

You **must** submit your application electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site. See Section B, Notice Inviting Applications and Section J, Application Transmittal Instructions.

NOTE: You will be uploading sections of your application by heading. There is a heading for: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (10) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (11) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. There is a file size limitation to each section, and you may upload only one document under each heading. Therefore, in order to make sure that all of your materials are uploaded successfully, you will need to combine multiple original documents for a heading (e.g., letters, resumes) into a single document before uploading.

Electronic copies must be fully uploaded on the Grants.gov site by 4:30:00 pm, Washington DC time on the closing date, April 20, 2015. This process may take up to several hours. Please allow several hours or a full day to submit your application. If there is a submission error, additional time will be needed to correct the error and resubmit. **We encourage you to read Section J – Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants**

PROGRAM REGULATIONS

These grants are subject to the requirements of the Health and Human Services Regulations 45 part 75 and general rules affecting the submittal, review, grant award, and post-award administration for grant programs.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Pre-Application Meeting: A pre-application meeting will be held between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. on March 10, 2015 by teleconference. Interested parties are invited to participate in the pre-application meeting to discuss the funding priority and to receive information and technical assistance. You must contact Carolyn Baron at Carolyn.Baron@ed.gov by March 6, 2015 in order to participate in this meeting. NIDILRR staff also will be available to provide information and technical assistance via individual phone consultations from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on March 24, 2015. Requests for individual consultations during this one hour window must be made in advance to Carolyn Baron.

LETTER OF INTENT

Due to the open nature of the RERC competition on Information and Communication Technologies Access, and to assist with the selection of reviewers for this competition, NIDILRR is requesting all potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by March 24, 2015. Please see Section K of this kit for details.

OTHER INFORMATION

Please submit an appendix that lists every collaborating organization and individual named in the application, including staff, consultants, contractors, advisory board member, and anyone else whose selection as a peer reviewer might constitute a conflict of interest. We will use this information to help us screen for conflicts of interest with our reviewers.

If you have any questions about the information in this application package, please contact Patricia Barrett at patricia.barrett@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 245-6211. Individuals who use a telecommunications device (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. time, Monday through Friday.

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If you experience problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726.

Thank you for your interest in this program.

Sincerely,

John Tschida,
Director
National Institute on Disability,
Independent Living, and Rehabilitation
Research

SECTION B

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR NEW AWARDS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Applications for New Awards; National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers

AGENCY: Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)-- Individual Mobility and Manipulation, Information and Communication Technologies Access, and Physical Access and Transportation

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2015.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers: 84.133E-1, 84.133E-3, and 84.133E-5.

Note: This notice invites applications for three separate competitions. For funding and other key information for each of the three competitions, see the chart in the Award Information section of this notice.

Dates:

Applications Available: February 17, 2015.

Note: On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA was effective immediately. One provision of

WIOA transferred the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) from the Department of Education to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in the Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, NIDRR's name was changed to the Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). For FY 2015, all NIDILRR priority notices will be published as ACL notices, and ACL will make all NIDILRR awards. During this transition period, however, NIDILRR will continue to review grant applications using Department of Education tools. NIDILRR will post previously-approved application kits to grants.gov, and NIDILRR applications submitted to grants.gov will be forwarded to the Department of Education's G-5 system for peer review. We are using Department of Education application kits and peer review systems during this transition year in order to provide for a smooth and orderly process for our applicants.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting: March 10, 2015.

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: March 24, 2015.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 20, 2015.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program (Program) is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities, to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology. The Program's activities are designed to maximize the full inclusion and integration

into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities, and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program

The purpose of the RERCs program, which is funded through the Program, is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act. The RERCs program encourages advanced engineering research, develops and evaluates innovative technologies, facilitates service delivery system changes, stimulates the production and distribution of new technologies and equipment in the private sector, and provides training opportunities. RERCs seek to solve rehabilitation problems and remove environmental barriers to improvements in employment, community living and participation, and health and function outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

The general requirements for RERCs are set out in subpart D of 34 CFR part 350 (What Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Does the Secretary Assist?).

Additional information on the RERCs program can be found at:
www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/index.html.

Priorities: NIDILRR has established three priorities for the three competitions announced in this notice. These priorities are from the notice of final priorities for this program, published in the Federal Register on June 11, 2013 (78 FR 34897).

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2015 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from these competitions, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 45 CFR part 75, for each competition, we consider only applications that meet the program priority designated for that competition.

These priorities are:

| Absolute priority | Corresponding Competition CFDA NO. |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Individual Mobility and Manipulation | 84.133E-1 |
| Information and Communication Technologies Access | 84.133E-3 |
| Physical Access and Transportation | 84.133E-5 |

Note: The full text of these priorities is included in the notice of final priorities published in the Federal Register on June 11, 2013 (78 FR 34897) and in the applicable application package.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(3)(A).

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Department of Health and Human Services General Administrative Regulations in 45 CFR part 75 (b) Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 45 CFR part 75 Subpart F; (c) 45 CFR part 75 Non-procurement Debarment and Suspension; (d) 45 CFR part 75 Requirement for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); The regulations for this program in

34 CFR part 350; and (f) The notice of final priorities for this program, published in the Federal Register on June 11, 2013 (78 FR 34897).

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$2,775,000.

Maximum Award: See chart.

Estimated Number of Awards: See chart.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: See chart.

| CFDA Number and Name | Applications Available | Deadline for Transmittal of Applications | Estimated Available Funds ¹ | Maximum Award Amount (per year) ^{2 3} | Estimated Number of Awards | Project Period (months) |
|--|------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 84.133E-1, Individual Mobility and Manipulation | February 17, 2015 | April 20, 2015 | \$925,000 | \$925,000 | 1 | 60 |
| 84.133E-3, Information and Communication Technologies Access | February 17, 2015 | April 20, 2015 | \$925,000 | \$925,000 | 1 | 60 |
| 84.133E-5, Physical Access and Transportation | February 17, 2015 | April 20, 2015 | \$925,000 | \$925,000 | 1 | 60 |

¹ Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2015 or any subsequent year from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

² We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding the maximum amount. The Administration for Community Living may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

³ The maximum award amount includes both direct and indirect costs.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: States; public or private agencies, including for-profit agencies; public or private organizations, including for-profit organizations; IHEs; and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can obtain an application package via grants.gov, or by contacting Patricia Barrett: U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5142, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-6211 or by email: patricia.barrett@ed.gov.

If you request an application from Patricia Barrett, be sure to identify these competitions as follows: CFDA number 84.133E-1 Individual Mobility and Manipulation; 84.133E-3 Information and Communication Technologies Access; or 84.133E-5 Physical Access and Transportation.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission: Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for each competition announced in this notice.

Notice of Intent to Apply: Due to the open nature of the priorities in these competitions, and to assist with the selection of reviewers for these competitions, NIDILRR is requesting all potential applicants submit a letter of intent (LOI). The submission is not mandatory and the content of the LOI will not be peer reviewed or otherwise used to rate an applicant's application.

Each LOI should be limited to a maximum of four pages and include the following information: (1) the priority to which the potential applicant is responding; (2) the title of the proposed project, the name of the applicant, the name of the Project Director or

Principal Investigator (PI), and the names of partner institutions and entities; (3) a brief statement of the vision, goals, and objectives of the proposed project and a description of its proposed activities at a sufficient level of detail to allow NIDILRR to select potential peer reviewers; (4) a list of proposed project staff including the Project Director or PI and key personnel; (5) a list of individuals whose selection as a peer reviewer might constitute a conflict of interest due to involvement in proposal development, selection as an advisory board member, co-PI relationships, etc.; and (6) contact information for the Project Director or PI. Submission of a LOI is not a prerequisite for eligibility to submit an application.

NIDILRR will accept the optional LOI via mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or commercial carrier) or email, by March 24, 2015. The LOI must be sent to: Carolyn Baron, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 550 12th Street, SW., room 5134, PCP, Washington, DC 20202; or by email to: Carolyn.Baron@ed.gov.

For further information regarding the LOI submission process, contact Carolyn Baron at (202) 245-7244.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application.

We recommend that you limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 100 pages, using the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative. You are not required to double space titles, headings, footnotes, references, and captions, or text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative section (Part III).

An applicant should consult NIDRR's Long-Range Plan for Fiscal Years 2013-2017 (78 FR 20299) (Plan) when preparing its application. The Plan is organized around the following research domains: (1) Community Living and Participation; (2) Health and Function; and (3) Employment.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: February 17, 2015.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting: Interested parties are invited to participate in a pre-application meeting and to receive information and technical assistance through individual consultation with NIDILRR staff. The pre-application meeting will be held on March 10, 2015. Interested parties may participate in this meeting by conference call with NIDILRR staff between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., Washington, DC time. NIDILRR staff also will be available from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the same day, by telephone, to provide information and technical assistance through individual consultation. For further information or to make arrangements to participate in the meeting via conference call or to arrange for an individual consultation, contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice.

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: March 24, 2015.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 20, 2015.

Applications for grants under these competitions must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 7. Other Submission Requirements of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the

application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

4. Intergovernmental Review: This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372.

5. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

6. Data Universal Numbering System Number, Taxpayer Identification Number, and System for Award Management: To do business with the Department of Health and Human Services, you must--

- a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
- b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the System for Award Management (SAM) (formerly the Central Contractor Registry (CCR)), the Government's primary registrant database;
- c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and
- d. Maintain an active SAM registration with current information while your application is under review by the Department and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.

You can obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet. A DUNS number can be created within one-to-two business days.

If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. If you need a new TIN, please allow two to five weeks for your TIN to become active.

The SAM registration process can take approximately seven business days, but may take upwards of several weeks, depending on the completeness and accuracy of the

data entered into the SAM database by an entity. Thus, if you think you might want to apply for Federal financial assistance under a program administered by the Department, please allow sufficient time to obtain and register your DUNS number and TIN. We strongly recommend that you register early.

Note: Once your SAM registration is active, you will need to allow 24 to 48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov and before you can submit an application through Grants.gov.

If you are currently registered with SAM, you may not need to make any changes. However, please make certain that the TIN associated with your DUNS number is correct. Also note that you will need to update your registration annually. This may take three or more business days.

Information about SAM is available at www.SAM.gov. To further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account, we have prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet, which you can find at: <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov Web page: www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html

7. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under the program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for grants under the RERC competitions (CFDA numbers 84.133E-1, 84.133E-3 and 84.133E-5) must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide

Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not email an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access an electronic grant application for the RERC competitions (CFDA numbers 84.133E-1, 84.133E-3 and 84.133E-5) at www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for the applicable competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.133, not 84.133E).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received--that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system--after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we

retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at <http://www.G5.gov>.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that

material. Additional, detailed information on how to attach files is in the application instructions.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.
- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by email. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).
- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical

problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that the problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because--

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system;

and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevents you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Patricia Barrett, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5142, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. FAX: (202) 245-6211.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.133E-1, 84.133E-3 or 84.133E-5)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

Note for Mail of Paper Applications: If you mail your application to the Department--

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the program under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for the competitions announced in this notice are from 34 CFR 350.54 and are listed in the application package.

2. Review and Selection Process: Final award decisions will be made by the Administrator, ACL. In making these decisions, the Administrator will take into consideration: the rank order of the peer review panel; reviews for programmatic and grants management compliance; the reasonableness of the estimated cost to the government considering the available funding and anticipated results; and the likelihood that the proposed project will result in the benefits expected. Under 45 part Section 75.205, item (3) history of performance is an item that is reviewed.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living also requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities

receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Health and Human Services.

3. Special Conditions: Under 45 CFR part 75, the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living may impose special conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 45 CFR part 75, as applicable; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we send you a Notice of Award (NOA); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your NOA. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the NOA. The NOA also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 45 CFR part 75 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 45 CFR part 75.

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Administrator of the Administration for

Community Living. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living under 45 CFR part 75. All NIDILRR grantees will submit their annual and final reports through NIDILRR's online reporting system or as designated in the terms and conditions of your NOA. The Administrator of the Administration for Community Living may also require more frequent performance reports under 45 CFR part 75. For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

(c) FFATA and FSRS Reporting

The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires data entry at the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (<http://www.FSRS.gov>) for all sub-awards and sub-contracts issued for \$25,000 or more as well as addressing executive compensation for both grantee and sub-award organizations.

For further guidance please see the following link:

http://www.acl.gov/Funding_Opportunities/Grantee_Info/FFATA.aspx

If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information. Annual and Final Performance reports will be submitted through NIDILRR's online Performance System or as designated in the terms and conditions of your NOA. At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information.

Note: NIDILRR will provide information by letter to successful grantees on how and when to submit the report.

4. Performance Measures: To evaluate the overall success of its research program, NIDILRR assesses the quality of its funded projects through a review of grantee

performance and accomplishments. Each year, NIDILRR examines a portion of its grantees to determine:

- The number of products (e.g., new or improved tools, methods, discoveries, standards, interventions, programs, or devices developed or tested with NIDILRR funding) that have been judged by expert panels to be of high quality and to advance the field.
- The average number of publications per award based on NIDILRR-funded research and development activities in refereed journals.
- The percentage of new NIDILRR grants that assess the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and devices using rigorous methods.

NIDILRR uses information submitted by grantees as part of their Annual Performance Reports for these reviews.

5. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award, the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living may consider, under 45 CFR part 75, the extent to which a grantee has made “substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application.” This consideration includes the review of a grantee’s progress in meeting the targets and projected outcomes in its approved application, and whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget. In making a continuation grant, the Administrator also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department. Continuation funding is also subject to availability of funds.

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: Patricia Barrett, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5142, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-6211 or by email: patricia.barrett@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

VIII. Other Information

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the Federal Register by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated:

John Tschida,
Director
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living,
and Rehabilitation Research

SECTION C

**NOTICE OF FINAL PRIORITY
PUBLISHED: June 11, 2013**

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

34 CFR Chapter III

Final priorities. National Institute on Disability and
Rehabilitation Research--Disability and Rehabilitation Research
Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Engineering
Research Centers

[CFDA Numbers: 84.133E-5; 84.133E-6; 84.133E-7; and 84.133E-8.]

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative
Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Final priorities.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services announces priorities under the
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers
Program administered by the National Institute on Disability and
Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). Specifically, we announce
priorities for a Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center
(RERC) on Rehabilitation Strategies, Techniques, and
Interventions (Priority 1), Information and Communication
Technologies Access (Priority 2), Individual Mobility and
Manipulation (Priority 3), and Physical Access and
Transportation (Priority 4). The Assistant Secretary may use
one or more of these priorities for competitions in fiscal year
(FY) 2013 and later years. We take this action to focus
research attention on areas of national need. We intend these
priorities to improve community living and participation, health

and function, and employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These priorities are effective July 11, 2013.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marlene Spencer, U.S.

Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133,
Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700.

Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by email: marlene.spencer@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities, to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities, and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program

The purpose of NIDRR's RERCs program, which is funded through the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, is to improve the effectiveness of services

authorized under the Rehabilitation Act. It does so by conducting advanced engineering research, developing and evaluating innovative technologies, facilitating service delivery system changes, stimulating the production and distribution of new technologies and equipment in the private sector, and providing training opportunities. RERCs seek to solve rehabilitation problems and remove environmental barriers to improvements in employment, community living and participation, and health and function outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

The general requirements for RERCs are set out in subpart D of 34 CFR part 350 (What Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Does the Secretary Assist?).

Additional information on the RERCs program can be found at: www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/index.html.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(3)(A).

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

We published a notice of proposed priorities for this program in the Federal Register on March 8, 2013 (78 FR 14947). That notice contained background information and our reasons for proposing these particular priorities.

There are differences between the proposed priorities and the final priorities as discussed in the Analysis of Comments and Changes section.

Public Comment: In response to our invitation in the notice of

proposed priorities, 13 parties submitted comments on the proposed priorities.

We group issues according to the priority or priorities to which they pertain. Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes or suggested changes the law does not authorize us to make under the applicable statutory authority. In addition, we generally do not address comments that raise concerns not directly related to the proposed priorities.

Analysis of Comments and Changes: An analysis of the comments and changes in the priorities since publication of the notice of proposed priorities follows.

RERC on Rehabilitation Strategies, Techniques, and Interventions
(Priority 1)

Comment: Eight commenters noted that this priority includes “communication aids” as one among many potential topics for research and development. Each of these commenters described the need for continued research and development on communication enhancement and augmentative and alternative communication interventions. These commenters noted that additional research is specifically needed to develop better measures of outcomes for communication enhancement treatments and interventions. These commenters requested that NIDRR create a priority for an RERC that is dedicated specifically to communication enhancement.

Discussion: NIDRR acknowledges the importance of communication enhancement technologies and augmentative and alternative

communication interventions. The priority is intended to be broad enough to allow applicants to submit proposals for an RERC on communication enhancement and augmentative and alternative communication interventions, as well as on other important topics. As discussed in NIDRR's Long-Range Plan for Fiscal Years 2013-2017 (78 FR 20299) (Plan), NIDRR seeks to generate more field-initiated grant opportunities. With the priorities established in this notice, we encourage RERC applicants to propose and justify research and development across a wide range of potential topics in the broad area of rehabilitation strategies, techniques, and interventions. As described in our Plan, NIDRR anticipates holding grant competitions on a regular basis in this and the three other broad rehabilitation engineering areas described in this notice. Through this process, NIDRR aims to increase competition for RERC grants and to draw upon the field's expertise, knowledge, and creativity to optimize the quality and relevance of the rehabilitation engineering research and development that NIDRR funds.

Changes: None.

RERC on Information and Communication Technologies

(Priority 2)

Comment: Two commenters noted that this priority focuses primarily on the accessibility of information and communication technologies (ICT) and suggested that the title of this priority reflect this focus on access.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that the title of this priority should be changed to reflect that the priority's focus on ICT accessibility.

Changes: NIDRR has revised the title of this priority to "RERC on Information and Communication Technologies Access."

RERC on Individual Mobility and Manipulation (Priority 3)

Comment: One commenter suggested that this priority focus on the engineering of low-cost, high-quality products that enhance the ability of individuals with disabilities to perform activities of daily living and to be more independent. The commenter suggested that the products generated by the RERC be adjustable, lightweight, durable, user-friendly, and low maintenance.

Discussion: NIDRR generally agrees with the comments about the importance of developing products that are adjustable, lightweight, durable, user-friendly, and low maintenance. At the same time, we recognize that achieving all of these qualities may not be feasible, depending on the intended use of the product and its target population or on the stage of research and development in a particular rehabilitation engineering subfield. Nothing in the priority precludes applicants from proposing research and development projects that focus on the design qualities identified by the commenter. However, we do not want to discourage important, innovative, or new research and development activities by requiring these design qualities in each of the products to be developed by this

RERC. The peer review process will determine the merits of each proposal.

Changes: None.

RERC on Physical Access and Transportation (Priority 4)

NIDRR did not receive comments on this priority.

Comments Applicable to All Four Priorities

Comment: Two commenters suggested that NIDRR require applicants under each of the priorities to address the "stages of research" and the "stages of development" that are described in NIDRR's Plan.

Discussion: RERC grantees conduct both research and development projects. As discussed in the Plan, NIDRR is working with stakeholders to develop "stages of development" comparable to its "stages of research" for use by applicants and grantees. Because research and development tend to be interwoven in the RERCs program, we believe it would be premature to require applicants to identify their stages of research until we have developed the stages of development and clarified the interaction between the two. Once NIDRR completes this process, we anticipate requiring identification of stages of research and stages of development in RERC grant applications.

Changes: None.

FINAL PRIORITIES:

Priority 1--RERC on Rehabilitation Strategies, Techniques, and Interventions.

Under this priority, the RERC must research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies and strategies that will result in new or improved products, devices, and technological advances that are integrated into rehabilitation services in clinical or community settings. The RERC must be designed to improve outcomes of individuals with disabilities in one or more of the following domains: employment, community living and participation, or health and function. Research and development topics under this priority may include but are not limited to: virtual reality; therapy robots; telerehabilitation; recreational technology; health-related products and equipment; and cognitive, sensory, and communication aids.

Proposed Priority 2--RERC on Information and Communication Technologies Access.

Under this priority, the RERC must research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies and strategies that will optimize accessibility and usability of one or more of the following: telecommunications products; wireless technologies; technology interfaces; computer systems; software; and networks for individuals with disabilities. The RERC must be designed to improve outcomes of individuals with disabilities in one or more of the following domains: employment, community living and participation, or health and function. Research and development topics under this priority may include but are not limited to: telecommunication access in emergency situations; interoperability between current and next-generation

telecommunication access; access to and use of wireless technologies; universal design approaches in future generations of wireless technologies; and accessibility of information technologies and electronic products by people with disabilities.

Proposed Priority 3--RERC on Individual Mobility and Manipulation.

Under this priority, the RERC must research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies and strategies that will result in new or improved products, devices, or technological advances that allow individuals with disabilities to be more mobile and to manipulate their environments more efficiently and effectively. The RERC must be designed to improve outcomes of individuals with disabilities in one or more of the following domains: employment, community living and participation, or health and function. Research and development topics under this priority may include but are not limited to: equipment for personal mobility; assistive technology for manipulation; and prosthetics and orthotics.

Proposed Priority 4--RERC on Physical Access and Transportation.

Under this priority, the RERC must research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies and strategies that will result in one or more of the following: the continued promotion of universal design and the planning of accessible buildings, homes, parks, neighborhoods, and cities, or the accessibility

and safety of transportation options. The RERC must be designed to improve outcomes of individuals with disabilities in one or more of the following domains: employment, community living and participation, or health and function. Research and development topics under this priority may include but are not limited to: design and modification of the built environment; and the accessibility, safety, affordability, and independent use of transportation options (including public transportation, commercial transportation, and personal vehicles).

Requirements Applicable to All Four Proposed Priorities:

Under each priority, the RERC must be designed to contribute to the following outcomes:

(1) Increased technical and scientific knowledge relevant to its research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by conducting high-quality, rigorous research and development projects.

(2) Increased innovation in technologies, products, environments, performance guidelines, and monitoring and assessment tools applicable to its research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome through the development and testing of these innovations.

(3) Improved research capacity in its research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by collaborating with the relevant industry, professional associations, institutions of higher education, health care providers, or educators, as appropriate.

(4) Improved usability and accessibility of products and environments in its research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by emphasizing the principles of universal design in its product research and development. For this purpose, "universal design" means the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

(5) Improved awareness and understanding of cutting-edge developments in technologies within its research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by identifying and communicating with relevant stakeholders, including NIDRR, individuals with disabilities, their representatives, disability organizations, service providers, professional journals, manufacturers, and other interested parties regarding trends and evolving product concepts related to its research area.

(6) Increased dissemination of research in the research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by providing technical assistance to relevant public and private organizations, individuals with disabilities, employers, and schools on policies, guidelines, and standards related to its research area.

(7) Increased transfer of RERC-developed technologies to the marketplace. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by developing and implementing a plan for ensuring that all technologies developed by the RERC are made available to the public. The technology transfer plan must be developed in the

first year of the project period in consultation with the NIDRR-funded Disability Rehabilitation Research Project, Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer.

In addition, under each priority, the RERC must--

- Have the capability to design, build, and test prototype devices and assist in the technology transfer and knowledge translation of successful solutions to relevant production and service delivery settings;

- Evaluate the efficacy and safety of its new products, instrumentation, or assistive devices;

- Provide as part of its proposal, and then implement, a plan that describes how it will include, as appropriate, individuals with disabilities or their representatives in all phases of its activities, including research, development, training, dissemination, and evaluation;

- Provide as part of its proposal, and then implement, a plan to disseminate its research results to individuals with disabilities and their representatives; disability organizations; service providers; professional journals; manufacturers; and other interested parties. In meeting this requirement, each RERC may use a variety of mechanisms to disseminate information, including state-of-the-science conferences, webinars, Web sites, and other dissemination methods; and

- Coordinate research projects of mutual interest with relevant NIDRR-funded projects, as identified through consultation with the NIDRR project officer.

Types of Priorities:

When inviting applications for a competition using one or more priorities, we designate the type of each priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational through a notice in the Federal Register. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by (1) awarding additional points, depending on the extent to which the application meets the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Invitational priority: Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the priority a preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

This notice does not preclude us from proposing additional priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use one or more of these priorities, we invite applications through a notice in the Federal Register.
Executive Orders 12866 and 13563

Regulatory Impact Analysis

Under Executive Order 12866, the Secretary must determine whether this regulatory action is "significant" and, therefore, subject to the requirements of the Executive order and subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a "significant regulatory action" as an action likely to result in a rule that may--

(1) Have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, or adversely affect a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities in a material way (also referred to as an "economically significant" rule);

(2) Create serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency;

(3) Materially alter the budgetary impacts of entitlement grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or

(4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles stated in the Executive order.

This final regulatory action is not a significant regulatory action subject to review by OMB under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866.

We have also reviewed this final regulatory action under Executive Order 13563, which supplements and explicitly reaffirms the principles, structures, and definitions governing regulatory review established in Executive Order 12866. To the extent permitted by law, Executive Order 13563 requires that an agency--

(1) Propose or adopt regulations only upon a reasoned determination that their benefits justify their costs (recognizing that some benefits and costs are difficult to quantify);

(2) Tailor its regulations to impose the least burden on society, consistent with obtaining regulatory objectives and taking into account--among other things and to the extent practicable--the costs of cumulative regulations;

(3) In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, select those approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; distributive impacts; and equity);

(4) To the extent feasible, specify performance objectives, rather than the behavior or manner of compliance a regulated entity must adopt; and

(5) Identify and assess available alternatives to direct regulation, including economic incentives--such as user fees or

marketable permits--to encourage the desired behavior, or provide information that enables the public to make choices.

Executive Order 13563 also requires an agency "to use the best available techniques to quantify anticipated present and future benefits and costs as accurately as possible." The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB has emphasized that these techniques may include "identifying changing future compliance costs that might result from technological innovation or anticipated behavioral changes."

We are issuing these final priorities only on a reasoned determination that their benefits justify their costs. In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, we selected those approaches that maximize net benefits. Based on the analysis that follows, the Department believes that this regulatory action is consistent with the principles in Executive Order 13563.

We also have determined that this regulatory action does not unduly interfere with State, local, and tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

In accordance with both Executive orders, the Department has assessed the potential costs and benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, of this regulatory action. The potential costs are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering the Department's programs and activities.

The benefits of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program have been well established over the years, as projects similar to the RERCs have been completed successfully. Establishing new RERCs based on the final priorities will generate new knowledge through research and development and improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. The new RERCs will provide support and assistance for NIDRR grantees as they generate, disseminate, and promote the use of new information that will improve the options for individuals with disabilities to perform regular activities of their choice in the community.

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the Federal Register by using the article search feature at:

www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated:

Michael K. Yudin,
Delegated the authority
to perform the functions
and the duties of the
Assistant Secretary for
Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services.

SECTION D

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

Background:

NIDRR's mission is to generate new knowledge and promote its effective use to improve the abilities of people with disabilities to perform activities of their choice in the community, and also to expand society's capacity to provide full opportunities and accommodations for its citizens with disabilities (NIDRR Long-Range Plan, 2006). In support of this mission, NIDRR sponsors RERCs to address the barriers confronted by individuals with disabilities in all aspects of their lives.

NIDRR-sponsored RERCs engage in the systematic application of engineering sciences to design, develop, adapt, test, evaluate, apply, and distribute technological solutions to problems confronted by individuals with disabilities in functional areas, such as mobility, communications, hearing, vision, and cognition, and in activities associated with employment, independent living, education, and integration into the community (Rehabilitation Act of 1973). RERCs may focus their efforts at the individual level, for example, to develop assistive technology devices that enhance the physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities of individuals with disabilities. RERCs may also focus on the systems level, for example, by mitigating or eliminating barriers found in large social systems such as public transportation, telecommunications, information technology, and the built environment. RERCs conduct research and development that leads to the transfer of technology into commercialized or non-commercialized products that can be readily accessed and used to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

NIDRR seeks to establish RERCs that will address topics in four broad areas of rehabilitation engineering. These four areas, outlined in NIDRR's proposed Long-Range Plan for 2013-2017 (NIDRR Long-Range Plan, 2013), include: (1) rehabilitation strategies, techniques, and interventions; (2) information and communication technologies; (3) individual mobility and manipulation; and (4) physical access and transportation. By holding field-initiated RERC grant competitions in these four broad

areas, we aim to increase competition for NIDRR's RERC grants, and draw upon the field's expertise, knowledge, and creativity to optimize the quality and relevance of the rehabilitation engineering grants that we fund.

In the area of rehabilitation strategies, techniques, and interventions (priority 1), NIDRR seeks to fund research and development that leads to rehabilitation practices and services that improve the health, and the physical, cognitive, sensory, and communication abilities, of individuals with a wide range of disabling conditions. Rehabilitation engineering in this area should result in new or improved products, devices, and technological advances that enhance rehabilitation services in clinical or community settings. In this broad area, NIDRR has previously funded RERCs on successful aging, low vision and blindness, hearing enhancement, communication enhancement, cognitive technologies, recreational technologies, rehabilitation robotics, and telerehabilitation, among others.

In the area of information and communication technologies (priority 2), NIDRR seeks to fund research and development that reduces the digital divide between people with and without disabilities (Vicente & Lopez, 2010). Rehabilitation engineering in this area should optimize accessibility and usability of telecommunications products, wireless technologies, technology interfaces, computer systems, software, and networks for individuals with disabilities. In this broad area, NIDRR has previously funded RERCs on universal interface and information technology access, wireless technologies, and telecommunications access, among others.

In the area of individual mobility and manipulation (priority 3), NIDRR seeks to fund research and development to enhance mobility, physical movement, and manipulation of the environment, and to accommodate limitations in manual dexterity among individuals with a variety of disabling conditions. Rehabilitation engineering in this area should result in new or improved products, devices, or technological advances

to allow individuals with disabilities to be more mobile and to manipulate their environments more easily and effectively, increasing the independence of individuals with disabilities and allowing them to participate fully in their communities. In this broad area, NIDRR has previously funded RERCs on prosthetics and orthotics, wheeled mobility, and children with orthopedic disabilities, among others.

In the area of physical access and transportation (priority 4), NIDRR seeks to fund research and development that leads to greater accessibility of the built environment and better access to safe and accessible transportation options for individuals with disabilities. There is a need for more accessibility in commercial and private facilities, outdoor environments, and housing to increase independence and promote community integration for individuals with disabilities. In addition, easy-to-use, safe, and accessible transportation systems allow individuals with disabilities to move around, and participate more fully, in their communities and neighborhoods.

Rehabilitation engineering in this area should result in the continued promotion of universal design and the planning of accessible buildings, parks, neighborhoods, transportation options, and cities. In this broad area, NIDRR has previously funded RERCs on accessible medical instrumentation, workplace accommodations, universal design in the built environment, accessible public transportation, and wheelchair transportation safety, among others.

References:

NIDRR (2006). Notice of Final Long-Range Plan. 71 FR 8165. Available at: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/policy.html.

NIDRR (2013). Notice of Proposed Long-Range Plan. 77 FR 23231. Available at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-04-18/html/2012-9365.htm.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, PL 93-112.

Vicente, M. R., & Lopez, A. J. (2010). A multidimensional analysis of the disability digital divide: Some evidence for Internet use. *The Information Society*, 26(1), 48-64.

SECTION E

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF RERCs

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)

General Requirements of RERC program

The RERC must be designed to contribute to the following outcomes:

(1) Increased technical and scientific knowledge relevant to its designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by conducting high-quality, rigorous research and development projects.

(2) Increased innovation in technologies, products, environments, performance guidelines, and monitoring and assessment tools applicable to its designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome through the development and testing of these innovations.

(3) Improved research capacity in its designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by collaborating with the relevant industry, professional associations, institutions of higher education, health care providers, or educators, as appropriate.

(4) Improved usability and accessibility of products and environments in the RERC's designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by emphasizing the principles of universal design in its product research and development. For purposes of this section, the term "universal design" refers to the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

(5) Improved awareness and understanding of cutting-edge developments in technologies within its designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by identifying and communicating with relevant stakeholders, including NIDILRR; individuals with disabilities and their representatives; disability organizations; service providers; editors of professional journals; manufacturers; and other interested

parties regarding trends and evolving product concepts related to its designated priority research area.

(6) Increased impact of research in the designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by providing technical assistance to relevant public and private organizations, individuals with disabilities, employers, and schools on policies, guidelines, and standards related to its designated priority research area.

(7) Increased transfer of RERC-developed technologies to the marketplace. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by developing and implementing a plan for ensuring that all technologies developed by the RERC are made available to the public. The technology transfer plan must be developed in the first year of the project period in consultation with the NIDILRR-funded Disability Rehabilitation Research Project, Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer.

In addition, the RERC must--

- Have the capability to design, build, and test prototype devices and assist in the technology transfer and knowledge translation of successful solutions to relevant production and service delivery settings;
- Evaluate the efficacy and safety of its new products, instrumentation, or assistive devices;
- Provide as part of its proposal, and then implement, a plan that describes how it will include, as appropriate, individuals with disabilities or their representatives in all phases of its activities, including research, development, training, dissemination, and evaluation;
- Provide as part of its proposal, and then implement, a plan to disseminate its research results to individuals with disabilities and their representatives; disability organizations; service providers; professional journals; manufacturers; and other interested parties. In meeting this requirement, each RERC may use a variety of

mechanisms to disseminate information, including state-of-the-science conferences, webinars, Web sites, and other dissemination methods; and

- Coordinate research projects of mutual interest with relevant NIDILRR-funded projects, as identified through consultation with the NIDILRR project officer.

SECTION F

SELECTION CRITERIA

SELECTION CRITERIA

We use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications under RERC program. The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) Importance of the problem (10 points total)

- (1) The Secretary considers the importance of the problem.
- (2) In determining the importance of the problem, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant clearly describes the need and target population.

(b) Design of research activities (25 points total).

- (1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of research activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.
- (2) In determining the quality of research activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methodology of each proposed research activity is meritorious, including consideration of the extent to which--
 - (A) The proposed design includes a comprehensive and informed review of the current literature, demonstrating knowledge of the state-of-the-art;
 - (B) Each research hypothesis is theoretically sound and based on current knowledge;
 - (C) Each sample population is appropriate and of sufficient size;
 - (D) The data collection and measurement techniques are appropriate and likely to be effective; and
 - (E) The data analysis methods are appropriate.

(c) Design of development activities (25 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of development activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the quality of development activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the plan for development, clinical testing, and evaluation of new devices and technology is likely to yield significant products or techniques, including consideration of the extent to which-

(A) The proposed project will use the most effective and appropriate technology available in developing the new device or technique;

(B) The proposed development is based on a sound conceptual model that demonstrates an awareness of the state-of-the-art in technology;

(C) The new device or technique will be developed and tested in an appropriate environment;

(D) The new device or technique is likely to be cost-effective and useful;

(E) The new device or technique has the potential for commercial or private manufacture, marketing, and distribution of the product; and

(F) The proposed development efforts include adequate quality controls and, as appropriate, repeated testing of products.

(d) Design of training activities (5 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of training activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the quality of training activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the type, extent, and quality of the proposed clinical and laboratory research experience, including the opportunity to participate in advanced-level research, are likely to develop highly qualified researchers.

(e) Design of dissemination activities (5 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of dissemination activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the quality of dissemination activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the materials to be disseminated are likely to be effective and usable, including consideration of their quality, clarity, variety, and format.

(f) Plan of operation. (5 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the plan of operation.

(2) In determining the quality of the plan of operation, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the plan of operation to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, and timelines for accomplishing project tasks.

(g) Adequacy and reasonableness of the budget (4 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy and the reasonableness of the proposed budget.

(2) In determining the adequacy and the reasonableness of the proposed budget, the Secretary considers the extent to which the budget for the project, including any subcontracts, is adequately justified to support the proposed project activities.

(h) Plan of evaluation (8 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the plan of evaluation.

(2) In determining the quality of the plan of evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the plan of evaluation will be used to improve the performance of the project through the feedback generated by its periodic assessments.

(i) Project staff (8 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the project staff.

(2) In determining the quality of the project staff, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the key personnel and other key staff have appropriate training and experience in disciplines required to conduct all proposed activities;

(ii) The extent to which the commitment of staff time is adequate to accomplish all the proposed activities of the project.

(j) Adequacy and accessibility of resources (5 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy and accessibility of the applicant's resources to implement the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy and accessibility of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the applicant is committed to provide adequate facilities, equipment, other resources, including administrative support, and laboratories, if appropriate;

(ii) The extent to which the facilities, equipment, and other resources are appropriately accessible to individuals with disabilities who may use the facilities, equipment, and other resources of the project.

SECTION G

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Protection of Human Subjects

Research activities involving human subjects supported by awards under these programs are subject to Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects. You do not need an assurance or IRB approval as a condition of applying for this competition.

If you marked "Yes" for Item 3 of Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, you must provide a human subjects "exempt research" or "nonexempt research" narrative. Insert the narrative(s) in the space provided. If you have multiple projects and need to provide more than one narrative, please indicate which project each set of responses addresses.

A. Exempt Research Narrative. If you marked "Yes" for item 3 a. and designated exemption numbers(s), provide the "exempt research" narrative. The narrative must contain sufficient information about the involvement of human subjects in the proposed research to allow a determination that the designated exemption(s) are appropriate. The narrative must be succinct. In addition, narratives are required for each participating partner if research is being conducted at other sites.

B. Nonexempt Research Narrative. If you marked "No" for item 3 a. you must provide the "nonexempt research" narrative. The narrative must address the seven points. Although no specific page limitation applies to this section of the application, be succinct.

Human Subjects Requirements for HHS Grants

If your proposed project(s) involves research on human subjects, you must comply with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Regulations (Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46) regarding the protection of human research subjects, unless that research is exempt as specified in the regulation. All awardees and their performance sites engaged in research involving human subjects must have or obtain (1) an assurance of compliance with the Regulations, and (2) initial and continuing approval of the research by an appropriately constituted and registered institutional review board.

In order to obtain a Federal wide Assurance (FWA) of Protection for Human Subjects, the applicant may complete an on-line application at the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) website or write to the OHRP for an application.

To obtain a FWA, contact the OHRP at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp> .

SECTION H

APPLICATION FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (grants.gov) by the closing date unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement.

It is recommended that your electronic application (or paper application if you have requested and been approved for a waiver), be organized in the following manner and include the following:

NOTE: You will be uploading sections of your application by heading. There is a heading for: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (10) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (11) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. There is a file size limitation to each section and you may only upload one document under each heading. Therefore, in order to make sure that all of your materials are uploaded successfully, you will need to combine multiple original documents for a heading (e.g., letters, resumes) into a single document before uploading.

1. Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424)

This form requires basic identifying information about the applicant and the application.

Applicants should note that if there are multiple RERCs open to use the **RELEVANT** CFDA and Title from the NIA as the title.

2. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents shows where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized.

While the application will be submitted electronically, the reviewers will use printed copies during the review process. The Table of Contents will assist them in more efficiently and effectively evaluating your application.

Upload the Table of Contents to Optional Forms: Other Attachments.

3. **Abstract**

The ONE-PAGE abstract should be a comprehensive description of what the whole (all years) project is, not a description of the competency of the institution or project director. It is not an executive summary. It can be single or double-spaced.

Upload the Abstract to ED Abstract.

4. **ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524)**

Remember that you must provide complete budget information for each year of the proposed project. Use the Budget Narrative heading to upload.

Please report Federal Funds in Section A – Budget Summary and Non-Federal Funds in Section B – Budget Summary.

Specific instructions for completing the budget forms are provided within this application package.

Name: Enter the Name of the applicant organization(s) or institution(s) in the space provided.

Personnel (Line 1): Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6.

Fringe Benefits (Line 2): The institution's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.

Travel (Line 3): Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants and trainees on line 6.

Equipment (Line 4): Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant's policy.

Supplies (line 5): Show all tangible personal property except that on line 4.

Contractual (line 6): The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.

Construction (line 7): Not applicable.

Other (line 8): Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), stipends, training, and communication and printing costs.

Total Direct Costs (line 9): The sum of lines 1-8.

Indirect Costs (line 10): There is no restricted indirect cost rate for this program. Use your institution's federally negotiated rate.

Training Stipends (line 11): There are three types of projects that might include budget requests for stipends, tuition allowance, or other types of similar charges to support the objectives of the project:

- ☐ Fellowship or Scholarship Programs
- ☐ Educational Training Projects
- ☐ Projects where students receive tuition remission or other forms of compensation, as, or in lieu of wages.

Total Cost (line 12): This should equal to sum of lines 9-11 (total direct costs + indirect + stipends). The sum for column one, labeled *Project Year 1* (a), should also be equal to item 18a on the application cover sheet (SF Form 424).

Cost Share: If you are providing voluntary cost share. Please include this information on the ED Form 524, Section B – Budget Summary, Non-Federal Funds – Tab 2 and in your budget narrative.

5. Budget Narrative

This part requires an itemized budget breakdown for the project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures.

Address Cost Share in a separate section of the budget narrative labeled “Cost Share”.

Please provide an itemized budget breakdown for each project year.

Upload the Budget Narrative to the Budget Narrative Section.

6. Project Narrative

The application narrative responds to the General Requirements of RRTC's found in Section E and the Selection Criteria found in Section F of this application package. The reviewers will use this section to evaluate your application.

Upload the Project Narrative to the Project Narrative Section.

Each applicant is encouraged to limit the project narrative to the equivalent of no more than 100 pages, using the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative. You are not required to double space titles, headings, footnotes, references, and captions, or text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial.
- Include all critical information in the program narrative, minimizing the need for additional appendices.
- Ensure that you attach **.PDF files only** for any attachments to your application. PDF files are the only Grants.gov approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only when attaching files to their application. Specifically, the Department will not accept any attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files. Any attachments uploaded that are not .PDF files or are password protected files will not be read. If you need assistance converting your files to a .pdf format, please refer to this Grants.gov webpage with links to conversion programs: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs

NOTE: The recommended page limit does not apply to the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); the budget narrative, the forms; the one page abstract, the resumes; the bibliography; or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the project narrative section.

7. General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

8. GG Lobbying Form (90-0013)

Instructions for completing this form are included on the grants.gov website.

9. ED Supplemental Form for SF 424

Instructions for completing this form are included on the grants.gov website.

10. SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying

Instructions for completing this form are included on the grants.gov website.

11. Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support

Vitae of staff or consultants should include the individual's title and role in the proposed project, and other information that is specifically pertinent to this proposed project. If collaboration with another organization is involved in the proposed activity, the application should include assurances of participation by the other parties, including written agreements or assurances of cooperation.

Upload the Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support to the Other Attachments-Optional Section.

SECTION I

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AND

DUNS NUMBER INSTRUCTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. CAN I GET AN EXTENSION OF THE DUE DATE?

In the case of most competitions the answer is no. On rare occasions the Department of Health and Human Services may extend a closing date for all applicants. If that occurs, a notice of the revised due date is published in the Federal Register, this extension will identify who is eligible to apply for a given competition. There are no extensions or exceptions to the due date made for individual applicants. Additionally, there are provisions for extension for Grants.gov, per the guidance included in the application package.

2. WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION?

The application should include the following: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (10) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (11) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. The budgets for all years, including a detailed budget narrative, should be included. If collaboration with another organization or individual is involved in any proposed activity, the application should include assurances of participation by the other parties, including written agreements or letters of cooperation. It is not useful to include general letters of support or endorsement in the application. If the applicant proposes to use unique tests or other measurement instruments that are not widely known in the field, it would be helpful to include the instrument in the application. Many applications contain voluminous appendices that are not helpful and in many cases cannot even be mailed to the reviewers. It is generally not helpful to include such things as brochures, general capability statements of collaborating organizations, maps, copies of publications, or descriptions of other projects completed by the applicant.

3. WHAT FORMAT SHOULD BE USED FOR THE APPLICATION?

NIDILRR generally advises applicants to organize the project narrative to follow the selection criteria. The project narrative should address the specific selection criteria for the competition. The specific review criteria vary according to the specific programs and are included in this application package. Additionally, applicants should provide clearly stated hypotheses or research questions, goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and public benefit of the research or development project. The application should be organized to provide a thorough description of the methods and target population(s) and supported by evidence of need for the project, as identified in the relevant literature; citations are useful and may strengthen the proposal. Specific information on the format can be found in Section H – Application Format and Instructions of this application package.

4. ARE THERE PAGE LIMITS TO MY APPLICATION?

The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 100 pages, using the following

standards: (1) A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides; (2) Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative. You are not required to double space titles, headings, footnotes, references, and captions, or text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs; (3) Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch); (4) Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial; and (5) Include all critical information in the program narrative, minimizing the need for additional appendices.

5. MAY I SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO MORE THAN ONE OPEN NIDILRR PROGRAM COMPETITION AT A TIME OR MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION TO A PARTICULAR PROGRAM COMPETITION?

Yes. You may submit more than one application in any given competition. You may submit to as many open competitions, for which an application is responsive to the program requirements. However, each competition is unique and the selection criteria will vary from one competition to another. It is important that each separate application include the required materials for that particular competition.

6. DO I NEED AN ABSTRACT AND WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

Yes. The abstract is used by both the peer reviewers and the program staff in the review and processing of the application. The ONE-PAGE abstract should be a comprehensive description of the project (all years), not a description of the competency of the institution or project director. It is not an executive summary. It can be single or double-spaced. Upload the Abstract to ED Abstract.

7. WHAT IS THE ALLOWABLE INDIRECT COST RATE?

For the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (133E) applicants must have a current indirect cost rate agreement to charge indirect costs to a grant. The maximum amount of the award includes both direct and indirect costs (ED Budget Information non-Construction programs (ED-524)). More information on what you should know about indirect cost rates can be found at : <http://www.psc.gov/search/search-results.php?q=indirect+cost&search=1>

8. CAN PROFIT MAKING BUSINESSES APPLY FOR GRANTS?

Yes. However, for-profit organizations will not be able to collect a fee or profit on the grant.

9. CAN INDIVIDUALS APPLY FOR GRANTS?

Individuals are not eligible to apply for the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program.

10. CAN NIDILRR STAFF ADVISE ME WHETHER MY PROJECT IS OF INTEREST TO NIDILRR OR LIKELY TO BE FUNDED?

No. NIDILRR staff can only advise you of the requirements of the program in which you propose to submit your application. However, staff cannot advise you as to whether or not your subject area or proposed approach is likely to receive approval.

11. HOW DO I ENSURE THAT MY APPLICATION WILL BE REVIEWED UNDER THE CORRECT COMPETITION?

Applicants must clearly include the competition title and CFDA number on the Standard Form 424, and include a project title that describes the project, based on the competition.

12. HOW SOON AFTER SUBMITTING MY APPLICATION CAN I FIND OUT IF IT WILL BE FUNDED?

The time from closing date to grant award date varies from program to program. Generally speaking, NIDILRR makes awards within six to seven months after the closing date. Unsuccessful applicants generally will be notified within that time frame as well. When NIDILRR is able to release information on the status of grant applications, it will notify applicants by letter. This information is **not** posted on the NIDILRR homepage or Grants.gov.

13. WHAT START DATE SHOULD I USE ON MY APPLICATION?

For the purpose of estimating a project start date, the applicant should estimate approximately six to seven months from the closing date, preferably September 30. You must have a start date that allows you to complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) by July 1st with a minimum of six month of activities to report on.

14. IF MY APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, CAN I ASSUME I WILL GET THE REQUESTED BUDGET AMOUNT IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS?

No. Funding in subsequent years is subject to availability of funds and project performance.

15. WILL ALL APPROVED APPLICATIONS BE FUNDED?

No. Peer review can result in more applications being determined to be worthy of consideration for funding than available resources allow. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to consider resubmitting applications in future competitions. Funded applications will be notified in the manner described in #12.

16. DO I HAVE TO INCLUDE COST SHARE IN MY APPLICATION?

Cost share is not required for this program. If you choose to share costs, include the information on the SF 424, ED 524, and the budget narrative.

17. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO ABOUT HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION IN MY RESEARCH?

If you are planning research involving human subjects at any time during the project period, you check "Yes" in the Human Subjects section of the ED supplement to the SF

424 form. If you checked “Yes,” you need to indicate whether the research is exempt or not exempt from the protection of human subjects requirements and if you have an IRB number. You will need to fill out the human subjects narrative for each site where the research is being conducted. The program and the Department’s human subjects staff review the applicant’s response against the application itself to determine its accuracy. You will be contacted for additional information or clarification, if needed. More information can be found in the instructions for the SF 424 form and in this application package in the Human Subjects section.

18. MUST I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION VIA GRANTS.GOV?

Applications for grants for this competition must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us. **We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions.**

19. HOW WILL I RECEIVE FUNDING FOR THE ADDITIONAL YEARS OF MY GRANT (CONTINUATION AWARD)?

In making a continuation award, the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living may consider, under 45 CFR part 75, the extent to which a grantee has made “substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application.” This consideration includes the review of a grantee’s progress in meeting the targets and projected outcomes in its approved application, and whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget. In making a continuation grant, the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department. Continuation funding is also subject to availability of funds.

DUNS NUMBER INSTRUCTIONS

NOTE: Check with your fiscal office to see if your institution has an assigned DUNS before contacting Dun & Bradstreet.

D-U-N-S No.: Please provide the applicant's D-U-N-S Number. You can obtain your D-U-N-S Number at no charge by calling **1-800-234-3867** or by completing a D-U-N-S Number Request Form. The form can be obtained via the Internet at the following URL:

http://www.dnb.com/US/duns_update/index.html

The D-U-N-S Number is a unique nine-digit number that does not convey any information about the recipient. A built in check digit helps assure the accuracy of the D-U-N-S Number. The ninth digit of each number is the check digit, which is mathematically related to the other digits. It lets computer systems determine if a D-U-N-S Number has been entered correctly.

Dun & Bradstreet, a global information services provider, has assigned D-U-N-S numbers to over 43 million companies worldwide. **Live help Monday-Friday 8am-6pm (Eastern) Dial 1.800.234.3867**

Note: Electronic submission via Grants.gov must use the DUNS number your organization used when it registered in the Central Contractor Registry.

SECTION J

**GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION PROCEDURES AND TIPS
FOR APPLICANTS**

AND

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT – Application Submission Procedures

U.S. Department of Education

Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants

To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, this document includes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received in a timely manner and accepted by the Department of Education.

ATTENTION – Adobe Forms and PDF Files Required

Applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department of Education will be posted using Adobe forms. Therefore, applicants will need to download the latest version of Adobe reader (at least Adobe Reader 10.1.14). (Please note that in early 2013, Grants.gov discovered an issue with the newest version of Adobe Reader XI but it was subsequently resolved.) Information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe and links to download the latest version is available on Grants.gov at this link: [compatibility table](#). We strongly recommend that you review these details on [www.Grants.gov](#) before completing and submitting your application. In addition, applicants should submit their application a day or two in advance of the closing date as detailed below. Also, applicants are required to upload their attachments in .pdf format only. (See details below under “Attaching Files – Additional Tips.”) If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

- 1) **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration involves many steps including registration on SAM ([www.sam.gov](#)) which may take approximately one week to complete, but could take upwards of several weeks to complete, depending upon the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an applicant. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the Registration steps are complete. Please note that once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov, and before you can submit an application through Grants.gov. For detailed information on the Registration Steps, please go to: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html> [Note: Your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually (formerly Central Contractor Registry (CCR).)]

Primary information about SAM is available at [www.sam.gov](#). However, to further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account the Department of Education has prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet which you can find at: <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>

- 2) **SUBMIT EARLY** – We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded. The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application will vary as well. If Grants.gov rejects your application (see step three below), you will need to resubmit successfully to Grants.gov before 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date.

Note: To submit successfully, you must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This DUNS number is typically the same number used when your organization registered with the SAM (formerly CCR -Central Contractor Registry). If you do not enter the same DUNS number on your application as the DUNS you registered with, Grants.gov will reject your application.

- 3) **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK** – You will want to verify that Grants.gov received your application submission on time and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, login to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned. Once the Department of Education receives your application from Grants.gov, an Agency Tracking Number (PR/award number) will be assigned to your application and will be available for viewing on Grants.gov’s Track My Application link.

If the date/time received is later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time, on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of “Received” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Error Messages document at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/troubleshooting/encountering-error-messages.html>. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/about/contact-us.html>, or access the Grants.gov Self-Service web portal at: <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>

If electronic submission is optional and you have problems that you are unable to resolve before the deadline date and time for electronic applications, please follow the transmittal instructions for hard copy applications in the Federal Register notice and get a hard copy application postmarked by midnight on the deadline date.

If electronic submission is required, you must submit an electronic application before 4:30:00 p.m., unless you follow the procedures in the Federal Register notice and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to logon to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application. **You must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov.**

Please go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/about/contact-us.html> for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Submit Application FAQs found on the Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/general-support/faqs.html>.

Dial-Up Internet Connections

When using a dial up connection to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g. cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. **If you do not have access to a high-speed connection and electronic submission is required, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

MAC Users

For MAC compatibility information, review the Operating System Platform Compatibility Table at the following Grants.gov link: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/recommended-software.html>. **If electronic submission is required and you are concerned about your ability to submit electronically as a non-windows user, please follow instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Attaching Files – Additional Tips

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application, especially the requirement that applicants **only include read-only, non-modifiable .PDF files** in their application:

1. Ensure that you attach **.PDF files only** for any attachments to your application, and they must be in a **read-only, non-modifiable format**. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only

when attaching files to their application. Specifically, the Department will not accept any attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files, or an interactive or fillable .PDF file. Any attachments uploaded that are not .PDF files or are password protected files will not be read. If you need assistance converting your files to a .pdf format, please refer to the following Grants.gov webpage with links to conversion programs under the heading of additional resources:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/pdf-conversion-software.html>

2. Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
3. When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded files must be less than 50 characters, contain no spaces, no special characters (example: -, &, *, %, /, #, \) including periods (.), blank spaces and accent marks. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.
4. Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package totals 1 to 2 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAIL DELIVERY IF A WAIVER HAS BEEN OBTAINED

Submission of Paper Applications by Mail:

If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: **CFDA number 84.133E-1, 84.133E-3, or 84.133E-5**
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

Note for Mail of Paper Applications: If you mail your application to the Department--

- (1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

Section K

Letter of Intent

Notice of Intent to Apply:

Due to the open nature of the RERC competition on Information and Communication Technologies Access competition, and to assist with the selection of reviewers for this competition, NIDILRR is requesting all potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). The submission is not mandatory and the content of the LOI will not be peer reviewed or otherwise used to rate an applicant's application.

Each LOI should be limited to a maximum of four pages and include the following information: (1) the title of the proposed project, which final priority will be addressed, the name of the company, the name of the Project Director or Principal Investigator (PI), and the names of partner institutions and entities; (2) a brief statement of the vision, goals, and objectives of the proposed project and a description of its activities at a sufficient level of detail to allow NIDILRR to select potential peer reviewers; (3) a list of proposed project staff including the Project Director or PI and key personnel; (4) a list of individuals whose selection as a peer reviewer might constitute a conflict of interest due to involvement in proposal development, selection as an advisory board member, co-PI relationships, etc.; and (5) contact information for the Project Director or PI.

NIDILRR will accept the optional LOI via mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or commercial carrier) or email, by March 24, 2015. The LOI must be sent to: Carolyn Baron, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 550 12th Street, SW., room 5134, PCP, Washington, DC 20202; or by email to: Carolyn.Baron@ed.gov.

For further information regarding the LOI submission process, contact Carolyn Baron at (202) 245-7244.

SECTION L
REQUIRED FORMS
AND
FORM INSTRUCTIONS

REQUIRED FORMS

All electronic and paper (if a waiver has been submitted and approved) applications submitted to NIDILRR must include the following forms/parts:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524)
- Budget Narrative
- Project Narrative
- General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427
- GG Lobbying Form (90-0013)
- ED Supplemental Form for SF 424
- SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying
- Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support

A separate application must be submitted for each grant sought. No grant may be awarded unless the completed application forms have been received. All above forms are mandatory and must be submitted with the application. If an item does not appear to be relevant, write "NA" for not applicable.

Instructions for each form are provided on the Grants.gov website.

SECTION M
APPLICATION CHECKLIST

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Did you complete the registration process for Grants.gov for the mandatory electronic submission on www.grants.gov?

Does your application include each of the following?

- ☐ Cover page (SF 424) marked appropriately with **84.133E-3**. Download correct package for **84.133E-3**
- ☐ Priority Topic identified in the Descriptive Title in Block 12 of the SF 424
- ☐ Budget form (ED form 524) with dollar amounts not exceeding the maximum in any year
- ☐ Voluntary Cost Share included side “B” of the ED 524 and explained in the budget narrative for each year
- ☐ Budget narrative for each year with arithmetic checked for accuracy
- ☐ Program narrative, including abstract and responses to the selection criteria
- ☐ Assurances and Certifications (from the forms list in section L)
- ☐ Correctly uploaded files on grants.gov
- ☐ Narrative on the Protection of Human Subjects

Did you do each of the following?

- ☐ Submit application on or before April 20, 2015
- ☐ Fully complete the upload of your application and receive successful validation of the submission before 4:30:00 pm, Washington, DC time on the closing date
- ☐ Provide the required 1 original and 2 copies of the application if submitting by post, or carrier service. (If possible, please also send 9 additional paper copies and a disk copy.)
- ☐ Use the correct mailing address from Section J if submitting by post, or carrier service

PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 200 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1820-0027. Note: Please do not return the completed application to this address.

Note: On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA was effective immediately. One provision of WIOA transferred the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) from the Department of Education to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in the Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, NIDRR's name was changed to the Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). For FY 2015, all NIDILRR priority notices will be published as ACL notices, and ACL will make all NIDILRR awards. During this transition period, however, NIDILRR will continue to review grant applications using Department of Education tools. NIDILRR will post previously-approved application kits to grants.gov, and NIDILRR applications submitted to grants.gov will be forwarded to the Department of Education's G-5 system for peer review. We are using Department of Education application kits and peer review systems during this transition year in order to provide for a smooth and orderly process for our applicants.